

Success in High-Need Schools Journal

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Issue Theme: “*Teacher Leadership*”

Abstract

Teacher leadership in Finland, Korea, Singapore, and the United Kingdom has been associated with student learning improvements, especially in mathematics and science. Team teaching in Japan, known as “collaborative lesson study,” is credited with the consistently high performance of Japanese students. American educators are also beginning to recognize that educational reforms must empower teachers to utilize their talents, knowledge, and creativity more fully in order to advance student learning. Underscoring the potential of teacher leadership, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) noted, “Within every school there is a sleeping giant of teacher leadership, which can be a strong catalyst for making change.” The 2012 report of the U.S. Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium declared, “We want to reinforce that teacher leadership can play a pivotal role in increasing student achievement....” Teacher leaders assume roles of collaborating with school administrators and other teachers to bring high level teamwork and innovation to the learning process while helping to improve teacher evaluation and professional development.

The Illinois State Board of Education authorized college teacher education programs to offer teacher leader endorsement programs in 2012, replacing the Type 75 general administrative certificate, the common preparation route for school principals. Illinois state school superintendent Chris Koch observed that these programs “will be helpful in retaining and developing high-performing teachers for leadership roles and in building competencies necessary for high quality leadership and decision-making in schools.” Eleven Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI) member institutions have received approval to offer teacher leader endorsements. Significantly, these programs enable teachers to advance professionally while remaining in teaching, rather than the traditional route of becoming principals and leaving the classroom.

This issue of *Success in High-Need Schools Journal* traces the recent history of the teacher leader movement in the United States and Illinois, including the programs of ACI member colleges and universities. Although it is too early to associate these programs with student learning achievements, impacts of teacher leadership in changing school culture, methods of teaching, and teacher evaluation and professional development are also explored in this issue of *Success in High-Need Schools Journal*.

References

- Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2001). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium. (2012). *Teacher Leader Model Standards*. Retrieved at www.teacherleaderstandards.org.

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Publisher's Column: Introducing the Teacher Leader issue

By Jan Fitzsimmons

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While leaders have always emerged from the teacher ranks, the roles they play and the impact they have has frequently been minimized by the informality of their leadership roles. In this issue we explore a “coming of age” for teacher leaders as distributed leadership rises to prominence and teacher leader programs are developed at the state and national levels. Today we realize that teacher leadership is important because teachers are in the best position to understand the hurdles that challenge learning and the agents that advance learning. Teacher leaders are viewed as a critical component of shared leadership and they are found to be essential in developing professional learning communities in schools, districts, states and the nation. At a time of enormous educational reform, it is imperative that we support teacher leaders as we strive to strengthen and increase success for all students. The formalization of teacher leader positions allows for a commitment to the development of excellence in teaching and learning, as well as career ladders for developing leadership skills and responsibilities to help resolve critical issues in education. Such career ladders allow teachers to grow while continuing to be effective in the classroom. In this issue of *Success in High-Need Schools*, we explore the challenge, growth and promise of teacher leader programs in Illinois and across the nation.

In *Teacher Leadership: The Evolution of Education and Educators*, **Pam Reilly and Deb Kasperski** describe a new leadership paradigm in which shared leadership is valued and integral to the success of education. Embraced by the National Board and the Illinois Education Association, the role of teacher leaders is explored through national and state surveys, state policies and program implementation. The article calls for a change in the culture around school leadership that recognizes and values the significant contribution teacher leaders make “to the improvement of teaching and learning!”

While the public acknowledges there have always been teacher leaders, **Maddie Fennell’s** column identifies and defines a new kind of leadership initiative. The new “teacher leader” initiative not only recognizes informal leadership roles that teachers have always assumed, but it advances a kind of leadership in which teachers are essential partners to all education reform and decision-making, as well as to successful implementation efforts. Fennell describes the new federal ‘Teach to Lead’ program as an example of the important work teacher leaders are undertaking as the new teacher leader initiative marches forward.

In the five articles that follow, **Glenn, Behrens, Meyer et al, King and Black, and Rosborg and Wicker** share higher education perspectives on teacher leadership and the programs they’ve

developed at their respective ACI member institutions in order to prepare teacher leaders effectively who will pioneer a new generation of educational leadership to advance teaching and learning in ways that recent reforms have not. Preparation is emphasized in each article, one aspect of the teacher leader role that was previously taken for granted. **Marianne Glenn**, for example, discusses the principles and techniques that are essential to teacher leadership preparation and around which the “Teacher Leader” program at Olivet is framed. **Ann Behrens** reminds program developers of the important conversations with P-12 partners---a necessary component to grow effective programs that not only link theory and conceptual thinking to preparation, but also connect leadership preparation to real community needs. **Meyer, Migala and Plichta** call attention to the dire need for teacher leaders, especially in high-need schools that have enormous challenges in retaining teachers. In addition, they highlight the importance of clinical experiences and share testimonials from teachers at both the elementary and secondary level that attest to the effectiveness of the teacher leader program in terms of developing critical skills identified as needs by P-12 teachers and leaders.

Kathleen King and Kathy Black emphasize the important role that the model teacher leader standards have played in developing preparation programs for teacher leaders. They describe the rigorous admission standards that include an interview, a portfolio presentation and an on-site writing sample, as well as successful completion of an introductory course on educational leadership. Like Behrens, they too, utilize their P-12 partnership to identify critical needs and fine-tune their preparation for teacher leaders. **James Rosborg and Janet Wicker** stress the importance of teacher leaders’ desire to “improve schools, expand their effect on students and broaden their influence.” The promise of teacher leadership lies in the recognition that student success is more likely to occur when shared leadership is practiced.

Understanding both the benefits of and obstacles to successful distributed leadership is key to teacher leaders’ efforts. When shared leadership is encouraged, embraced, and supported teacher leaders can positively impact school and student success. Will shared leadership “catch on?” Will the new teacher leadership model affect the changes in motivation and achievement we seek for all students? As these authors suggest, the future is promising but the proof is incumbent upon qualitative and quantitative evidence of success that we are able to collect and share.

What Is Teacher Leadership?

By Maddie Fennell

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When I was named Nebraska Teacher of the Year in 2007, one of the first things I was asked was “When will you leave teaching?” Teachers have developed this perverse disincentive within our own profession, which only rewards those who leave the classroom or teach less. Who gets paid more? Department heads (often with a reduced teaching load) and administrators. Who is asked to participate in real decision making? Administrators and those whose daily jobs are far away from students. For too many years the narrative has been that the further away you are from the classroom, the more authority you are given for educational decision-making.

When teachers *were* invited to the table, too often they were the “parsley on the plate,” as my colleague Michael Dunlea from New Jersey phrases it. Decisions had already been made, committees had been in place for months, but they needed a teacher or two to make things look more palatable. I was asked to play that role a few times and folks were stymied when I refused to lend my name to efforts that I knew wouldn’t ultimately benefit students or teachers.

Today, a new kind of teacher leadership that is taking root – an acknowledgement that the problems facing our school systems will not be solved without active classroom teachers as integral partners at the decision-making table – an acknowledgement that teachers must be involved in the design of reform, not just in its implementation. Teacher leadership that addresses problems and tries to tackle them not only in the short term as an individual but also systemically where possible; leadership that stems from the individual looking out for the collective beyond the classroom – the school, district, community, profession, and more; leadership that takes place *outside* of the classroom while teachers stay *in* the classroom continuing to meet the needs of students.

In March 2014, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced [Teach to Lead](#), a partnership between the U.S. Department of Education, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and, [as announced last week](#), ASCD; the initiative has also garnered 87 additional [supporters](#). In announcing Teach to Lead, Secretary Duncan stated, “Teacher leadership means having a voice in the policies and decisions that affect your students, your daily work, and the shape of your profession. It means guiding the growth of your colleagues. It means that teaching can’t be a one-size-fits-all job — that there must be different paths based on different interests, and you don’t have to end up with the same job description that you started with. It means sharing in decisions that used to be only made by administrators — and the best administrators know they’ll make better decisions when they listen to teachers.”

While the Department readily acknowledges that they didn't start teacher leadership, their support has helped it blossom. In its first year, Teach to Lead has engaged with more than 3,700 educators in person and online. We've held five Teacher Leadership Summits and nine Leadership Labs, engaging more than 500 teachers across 46 states in developing their ideas into action plans. We've seen teachers engage as decision makers in their schools and school districts, and at the state level. We've challenged folks to think broader and deeper; this is best exemplified by the inspiring – and extemporaneous – [video of Ruthanne Buck](#), senior advisor to Secretary Duncan, at the Teach to Lead State Summit in May, which was held to help states build their support for teacher leadership:

Be bold. And I don't mean uproot or upend a system that exists, but I mean think about creative workarounds to create the space for teachers to develop these ideas because that is what teacher leadership is about. It's not just about hybrid roles. It's not just about teachers on policy committees. It's about asking them what do you need? what do you want?, and how do we create it?

When folks ask me to define teacher leadership, I get a bit worried. I worry that defining it will put limits on what is just beginning to bloom. It's kind of like asking a third-grader, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" before they even know where their skills, talents and interests will lead them. But when I think about teacher leadership, I am hugely optimistic because I know it is the ONLY way to design and implement the educational system that our students need and deserve. I look forward to the day when "teacher leadership" becomes a redundant term!

Teacher Leadership and the Evolution of Education: Teachers Leading Change for Student Success

By Pam Reilly, Deb Kasperski

Author Bios (following references at end of article):

Teacher Leadership

According to the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, teacher leadership is defined as, “The process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.” The shift in teaching and learning intended by the new Illinois State Standards and new evaluation systems is dependent on strong instructional leaders in our schools that can support teachers, guide resources, and evaluate, with knowledge and understanding, what is quality instruction at all grade levels and for all children. Yet, a 2012 nation-wide survey of 500 principals found an overwhelming agreement (75%) of those surveyed (regardless of school demographics) that the job of the principal has become too complex. (*2012 MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*) In recognition that the job of principal has become too complex for one person to do alone, teacher leadership roles offer opportunities for principals to distribute leadership tasks throughout the school while still nurturing a teacher’s voice and ideas regarding moving school communities forward.

To educate our students to be successful in this rapidly changing world, the education system and the education profession must transform dramatically in the very near future. This means creating opportunities and cultures within schools for teachers and leaders that promote collaboration, sharing of practice, leading from the classroom, and collective responsibility for the success of students. To be successful, schools must now shift to a culture of shared leadership, differentiated roles for teachers, delegated expectations for principals, and mutual accountability for student learning.

Teacher Leadership and National Board Certification: A Natural Fit

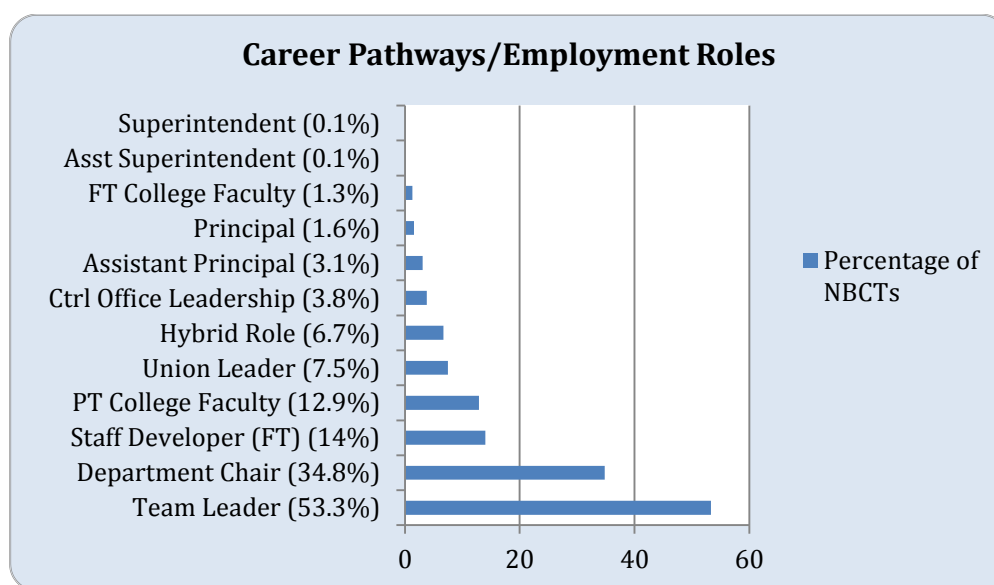
In 2015, the Illinois Education Association (IEA) established the Teacher Leader and National Board Outreach Committee in recognition of the connection between teacher leadership and National Board certification. IEA has seen their National Board Certified members in leadership roles or inquiring about teacher leadership. On the flip side, IEA has members who are teacher leaders who are also looking into becoming National Board Certified. To address this, IEA is examining its membership to locate pockets of districts that have teacher leadership components to utilize as models, and is beginning to provide professional development opportunities to engage members in this important topic of teacher leadership and National Board Certification.

To us, it is not surprising that IEA recognizes the connection between teacher leadership and National Board Certification, as it is something that we have seen for years. According to an ongoing statewide NBCT Census (*National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Website, National Board's 2014 NBCT Census*):

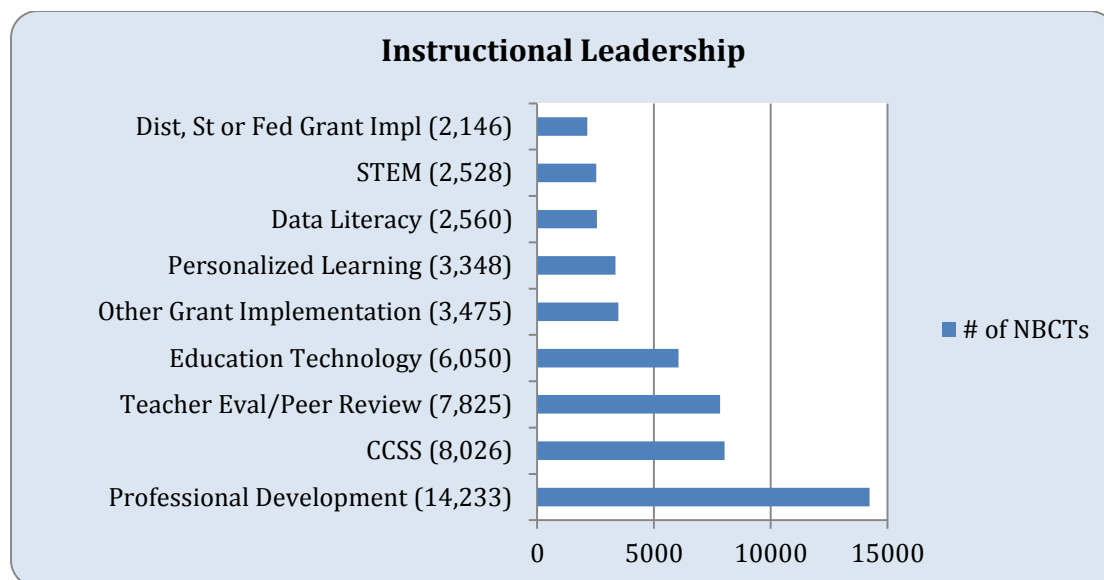
- 54% are working as team leaders
- 36% are department chairs
- 15% are staff developers and instructional coaches
- NBCTs are also serving as principals, superintendents, state government officials, state department of education staff and college faculty

In a national survey by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) of 19,684 National Board Certified Teachers (National Board's 2014 NBCT Census), the findings showed:

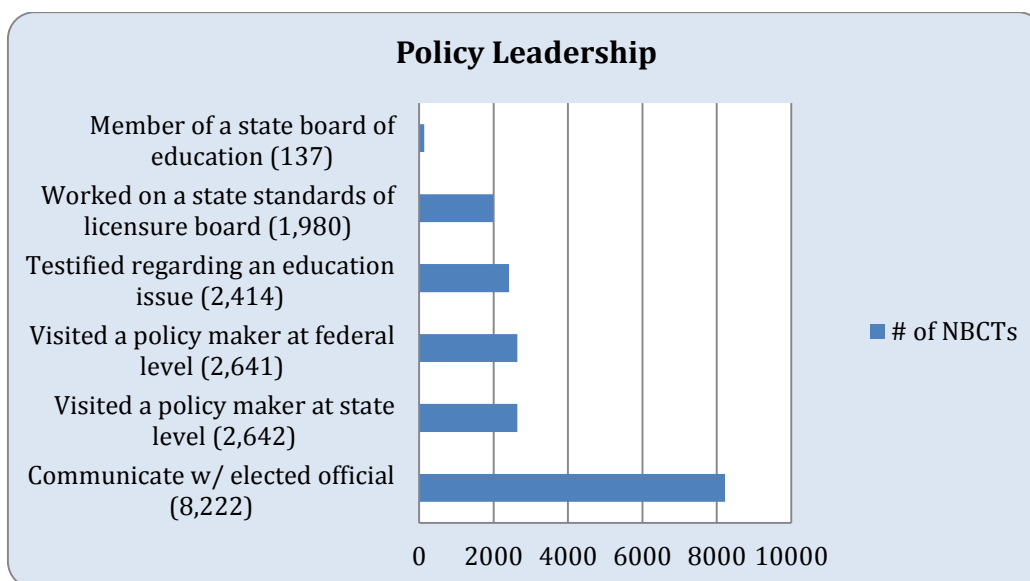
- NBCT Career Pathways-Employment Roles: Which of the following employment roles describe your current and previous experiences?



- Instructional Leadership-Which of the following efforts have you led at the school, district, or state level?



- Policy Leadership-Please tell us about any experiences with education policy.



Teacher leadership is not an explicit goal of National Board Certification, yet, it seems to be a popular outcome. Perhaps this is why National Board Certification is such a popular option for teachers in Illinois and has been so widely supported by the state. Since 1995, the Illinois State Board of Education has supported National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' (NBPTS) candidates by paying the application fee and offering mentoring support. In 1997, the legislature passed the Illinois Teaching Excellence Act, stipulating that the only means to the Illinois Master Teaching Certificate is by achieving National Board Certification. In 1999, the National Board Resource Center (NBRC) at Illinois State University was established as one of five national centers by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The only resource center in the Midwest, the NBRC has been pivotal in growing the number of NBCTs in all regions in Illinois. In 2002, the National Board Resource Center (NBRC) at Illinois State

University partnered with Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to establish the *Illinois NBPTS Comprehensive Support System* to expand recruitment and candidate support throughout Illinois. At this time, one hundred of the 102 counties in Illinois have an NBCT. Illinois has 6,025 NBCTs and ranks third in the nation in the number of new NBCTs and fifth in total number of NBCTs. Chicago perennially ranks in the top three cities nationally.

National Board Continuing to Innovate Through NB Professional Development Schools

In 2014, the NBRC introduced the Illinois National Board Professional Development Schools program¹. NB Professional Development School cohorts consist of 10 or more teachers and/or counselors along with their school leadership (principal or assistant principal) in a year-long high quality, school based professional development process. NBCT facilitators encourage conversations among the participants in the cohort while building on what teachers know and do to improve student learning. Cohorts work toward meeting the teaching standards and five core propositions of NBPTS while aligning their practice to the Common Core standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. There are currently 33 active cohorts throughout the state, of which 27 cohorts are in high-need schools. These cohorts provide a statewide model of how to nurture teacher development and leadership within a school-based model in partnership with the principal.

Bringing Universities into the Fold – A New Teacher Leadership Certificate

Following its history of being a forward-thinking state in regards to teacher leadership, Illinois passed legislation in 2006 (Public Act 094-1039) that created a new teacher leadership endorsement in Illinois. Although the original intent behind the legislation was to utilize teacher leadership for distributed leadership opportunities, due to public comment during the rule process for the new endorsement the resulting new teacher leadership certificate focused more on preparing content specialists. Moreover, few universities applied to offer the new teacher leadership programs. Then, in 2011, Illinois legislation (P.A. 097-0607) to implement a new system of educator licensure allowed for the teacher leadership endorsement to be re-examined. Staff at ISBE reached out to the P-20 Council Teacher and Leadership Effectiveness Committee² for assistance in developing recommended criteria for inclusion in the rules guiding the new Teacher Leadership Endorsement. In a series of webinars and face-to-face meetings, the committee invited stakeholders to review and contribute research, policies and best practices for teacher leaders nationally, internationally and within the state to inform and shape recommendations. The committee also considered models for teacher leadership that both enhance teacher practices but also retain and develop teachers along a career continuum. Using the Model Teacher Leader Standards developed by the Teacher Leader Exploratory Consortium

¹ In 2012, the NBRC partnered with stakeholders to create the Crosswalk of Illinois Education Initiatives and National Board (NBPTS) as the first step to restructuring NBPTS in Illinois and aligning state initiatives (Danielson Framework for Teaching, Illinois' new learning standards) to the National Board Five Core Propositions.

² The Committee on Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE) is a subcommittee of the Illinois P-20 Council, a 30-member Council, appointed by the Governor that includes business leaders, teachers, union leaders, faculty, school board members, parents, and representatives of private colleges, universities, community colleges, foundations, and state education and workforce agencies. The TLE Committee's mission is to advise the Governor on recommendations for strengthening and aligning the preparation, recruitment, certification, selection, evaluation, support, development, and retention of highly effective and diverse teachers and leaders.

as well as models for teacher leadership in other states, the committee surveyed committee members as to how teacher leaders are typically utilized by schools and districts to improve instruction, student achievement and teaching and learning practices.

The Role of the Teacher Leader

Unlike principals, the committee found that teacher leaders often act in a variety of roles and contexts. As such, the committee felt that it was important for ISBE to define teacher leadership in order to guide districts and universities and inform high-quality teacher leader preparation. The committee defined teacher leadership both as improving teaching and learning practices and developing the capacity of teachers and others, including the ability to:

- Harness the collective knowledge of teachers to impact teaching and learning, and school and student success;
- Promote shared governance and leadership in schools by working effectively with the principal and other adults in the school, with a consistent focus on student learning and achievement;
- Model excellence in teaching with a strong foundation in improving school/classroom climate, curriculum, instruction, assessment and intervention;
- Provide guidance, coaching, mentoring, influence, direction and support to teachers to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning; and
- Promote and influence change to improve school and student outcomes.

The committee found that teacher leaders function in both formal and informal roles in school districts and as such, schools and districts need flexibility in defining these formal and informal roles for teacher leaders to best serve the needs of their teachers, students and schools.

Therefore, committee members agreed it was important that Illinois should not require the teacher leadership endorsement for specific roles in school districts beyond those teacher leaders who evaluate teachers and other certified staff according to district requirements. The committee also took the stance that teacher leaders with this endorsement would need to be trained and certified as evaluators under the requirements of Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) in order to evaluate teachers and certified staff.

The committee's work identified specific roles that universities should consider when designing their teacher leadership endorsement programs:

- Curriculum Specialist (i.e., identifying, designing and implementing curriculum and school/district improvement)
- Coach (i.e., providing coaching to other teachers and staff on instructional practice and methods)
- Mentor teacher (i.e., providing mentoring to new and/or other teachers)
- Department Chair or Lead Teacher
- Content Specialist (i.e., leading instructional programs in a specific content area)
- Teacher leaders responsible for supervising others
- Teacher leaders who lead programs relating to school/classroom climate, curriculum, instruction or assessment
- Other roles that emerge from data reported by districts

Following the recommended criteria from the Teacher and Leadership Effectiveness Committee, ISBE put into place requirements for the new Teacher Leadership Endorsement programs. Based on the new requirements, the teacher leadership endorsement is now designed to create a career path to retain and develop high-performing teachers for leadership roles. Currently, twenty universities throughout the state have approved teacher leadership endorsement programs.

Revisiting Teacher Leadership

Now, three years later, the P-20 Council Teacher and Leadership Effectiveness Committee is again looking at the issue of teacher leadership but this time through the lens of district and school based positions. As such, the committee has focused on the following activities:

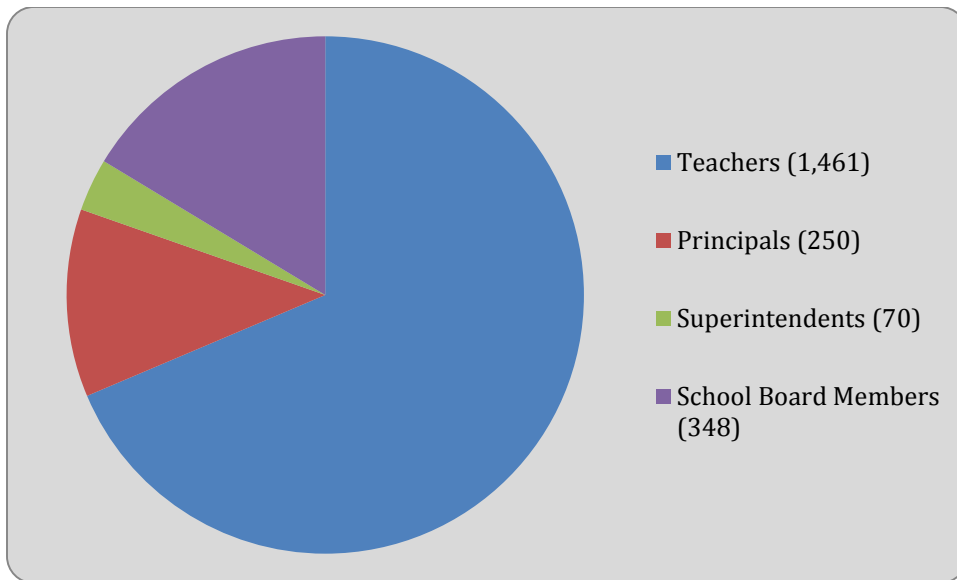
- Examining the current state of teacher leadership in Illinois schools by documenting what is occurring in this arena throughout schools and districts and to identify the needs of districts in this area.
- Learning about and publicizing innovative teacher leadership programs at the school, district, higher education, and state levels.
- Identifying best practices in teacher leadership at the district level.

The committee's first step consisted of designing and disseminating field surveys to teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members to gauge current trends on teacher leadership, identify the needs out in the field as well as to educate those taking the poll on teacher leadership.

The surveys focused on key areas of teacher leadership including:

- Value of Teacher Leadership
- Current Teacher Leadership Roles
- Selection Criteria and Process
- Teacher Leadership Training
- Knowledge of Teacher Leadership Endorsement
- Shared Decision Making and responsibilities among teachers and administrators
- Benefits and issues of teacher leadership programs
- Conditions for teacher leadership roles
- Professional Learning Communities
- Opportunities for collaboration
- Questions to educate those polled on teacher leadership

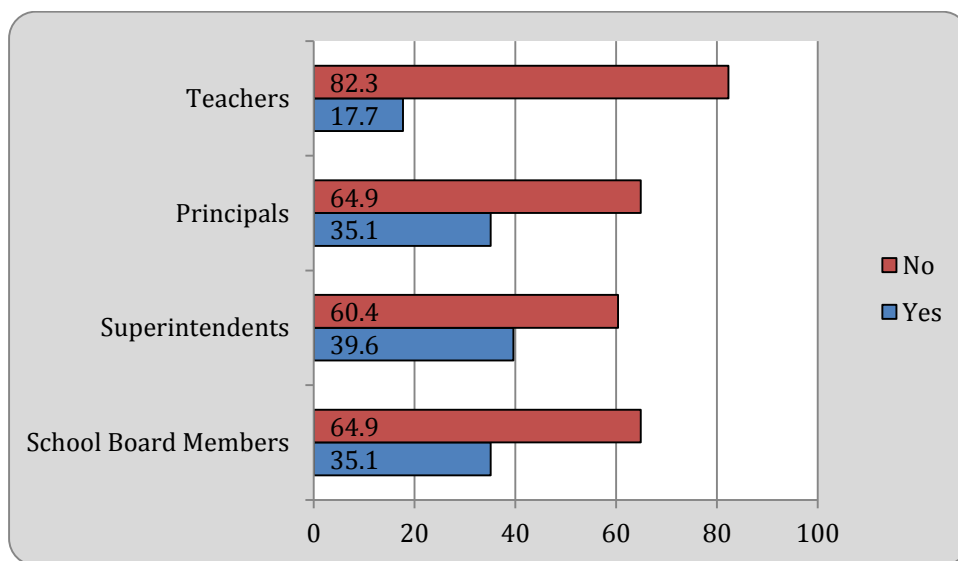
Respondents from across the state included:



The survey results showed that a small percentage of respondents knew about the Teach to Lead Initiative or that there were Illinois teacher leadership endorsements now available through universities.

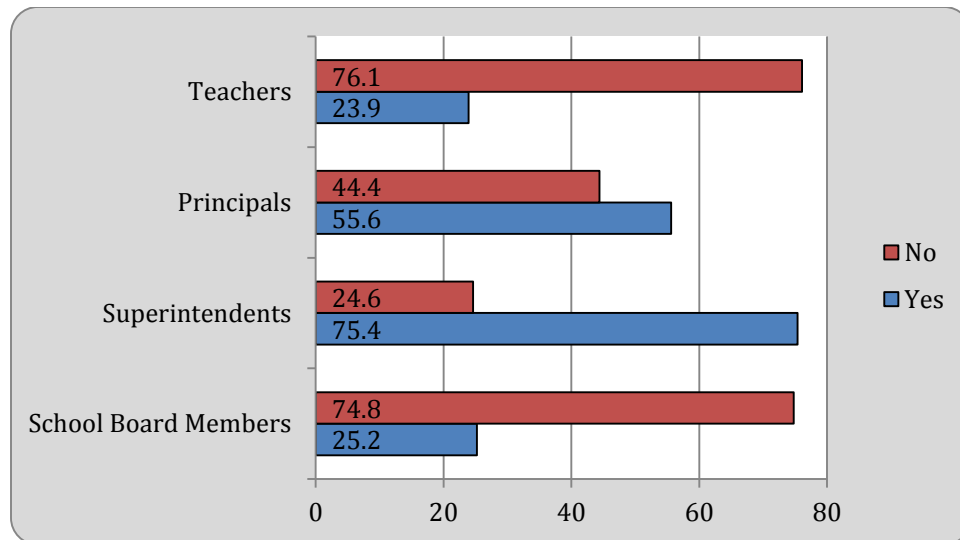
Question:

Were you previously aware of the Teach to Lead Initiative before taking this survey?



Question:

Did you know that there is a new Teacher Leadership Endorsement in Illinois?



The survey gathered some interesting data on the roles a teacher leader can play and the value that is placed on those roles from the different lenses of teachers, principals, superintendents and school boards. Below are some of the questions from the survey along with the preliminary results.

Question:

Which of the following roles do you or would you find most valuable in your district?

<i>Instructional Coach</i>	An instructional coach is someone whose chief responsibility is to bring evidence-based practices into classrooms by working with teachers and other school leaders.
<i>Peer Evaluators</i>	Provides opportunities to assist colleagues on the cycles of evaluations; pre-observation, observations and post-observations.
<i>Curriculum Director</i>	Generally oversees a wide range of educational aspects in a school district. Ensures that the district's curriculum meets educational expectations and standards, schools are using appropriate textbooks and teachers have the skills to deliver high quality instruction to students.
<i>New Teacher Mentor</i>	Promotes the growth and development of the beginning teacher to improve student learning. Mentors serve as colleagues and emotional supports for the challenging phase of a new teacher's first years in their career.
<i>Data Coach</i>	Facilitates development and implementation of an assessment program and data management system that supports the improvement of student achievement.
<i>Department Chair</i>	Department Chairs provide instructional leadership and alignment with standards. They assist in the development and implementation of common assessments and effective

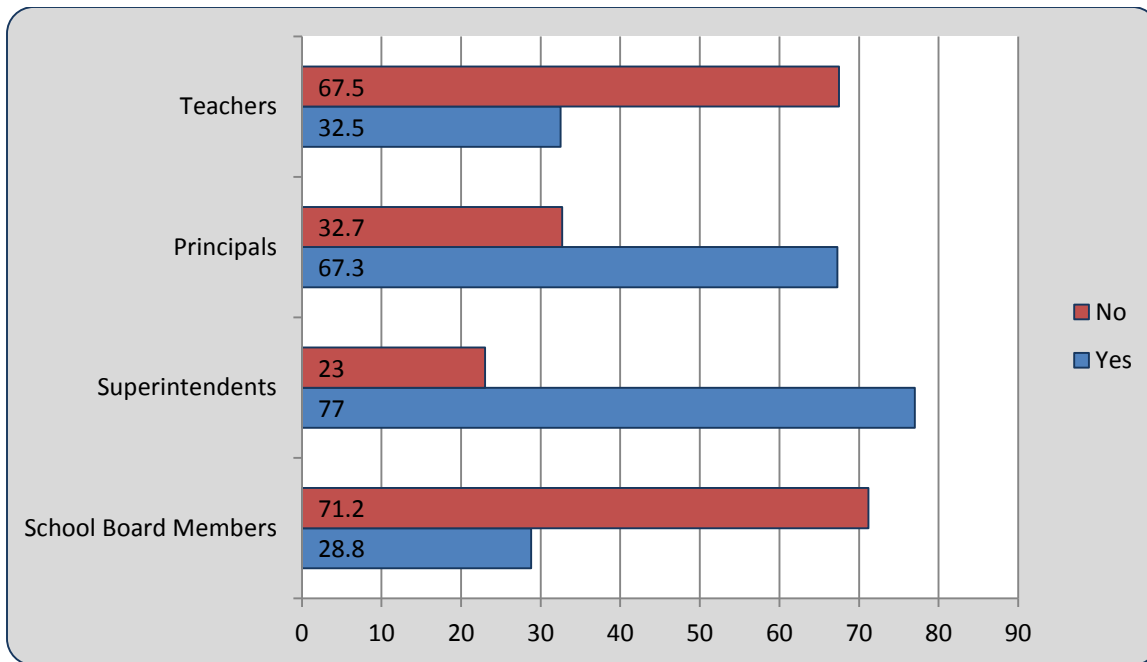
	instructional strategies in their content area.
<i>Staff Development Leader</i>	Provides ongoing professional development to their staff on areas of instruction, management, and best practices. Staff development leaders may arrange professional development meetings, book clubs, and other activities. They may model teaching strategies and instruction inside the classrooms.
<i>Technology Coach</i>	Provides ongoing professional development on utilizing technology in the classroom. Assists their teachers in infusing technology into their lesson plans. Technology coaches guide learning center directors and parents to new technology that will parallel with what is happening inside the classrooms to support students.

Top six ranked for each position:

Rank	Teacher	Principal	Superintendent	School Board Member
1	Technology Coach	Instructional Coach	Instructional Coach	New Teacher Mentor
2	Instructional Coach	Staff Development Leader	Technology Coach	Technology Coach
3	New Teacher Mentor	Technology Coach	Curriculum Director	Curriculum Director
4	Staff Development Leader	Data Coach	Staff Development Leader	Instructional coach
5	Curriculum Director	New Teacher Mentor	New Teacher Mentor	Staff Development Leader
6	Peer Evaluator	Curriculum Director	Data Coach	Peer Evaluator

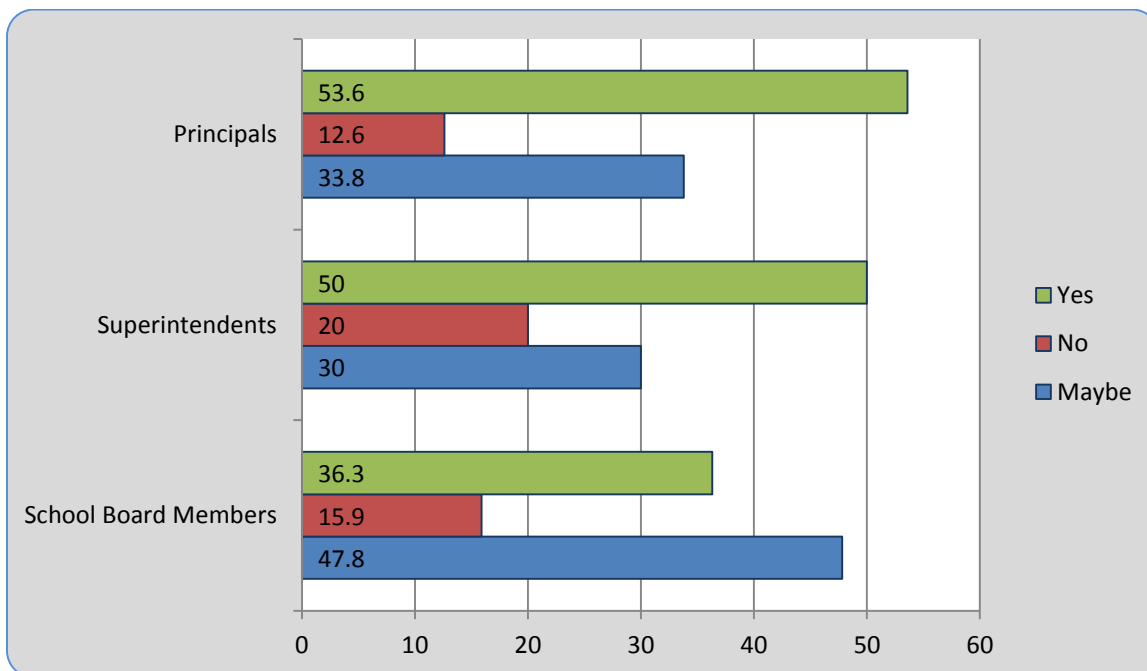
Question:

The previous roles described do not require a Type 75 (Administrator's certificate); did you know this information before taking this survey?



**Question:*

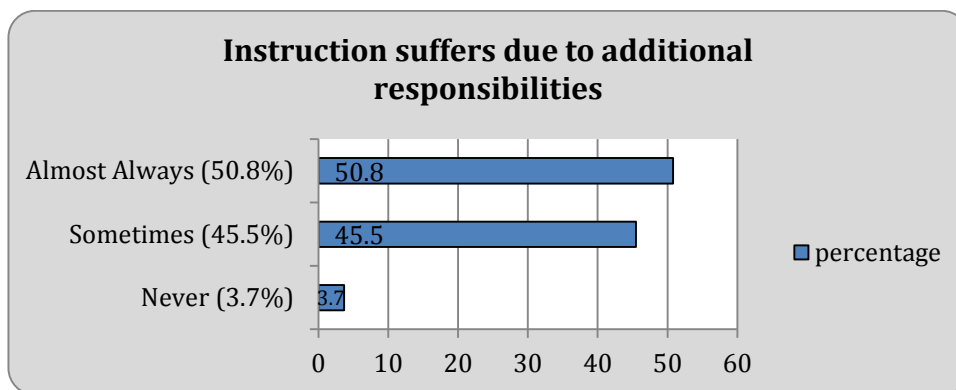
Would you like to see peer evaluations become part of your district to help increase the capacity of the principals and teachers?



Question:

As a classroom teacher I feel my instruction suffers because of the multitude of additional responsibilities that are added to my day.

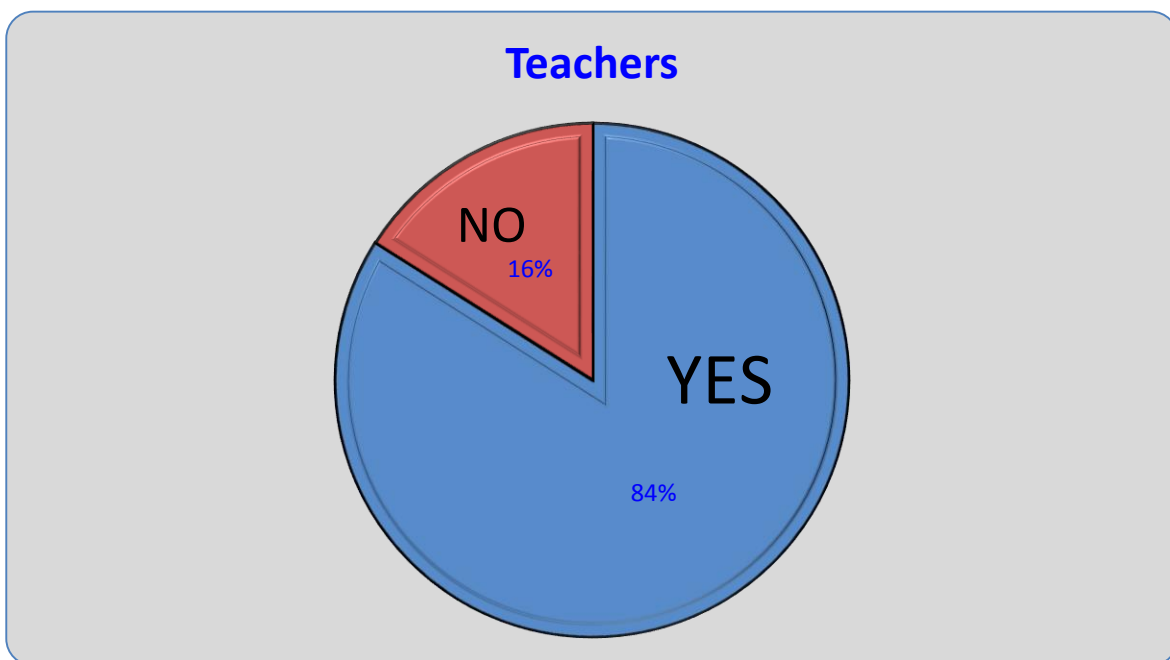
Teachers:



**Question:*

I would participate in bringing my voice to the tables of educational policy discussions if I was given time off to do so.

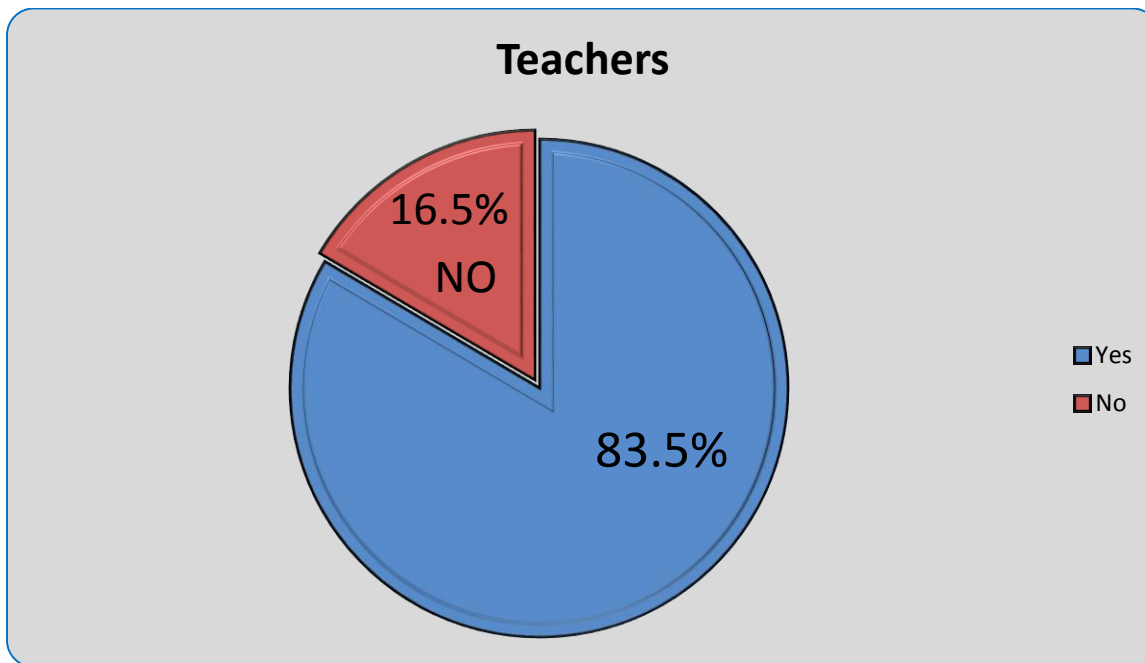
Teachers:



**Question:*

I would take on teacher leadership roles if I was given additional time in the school day.

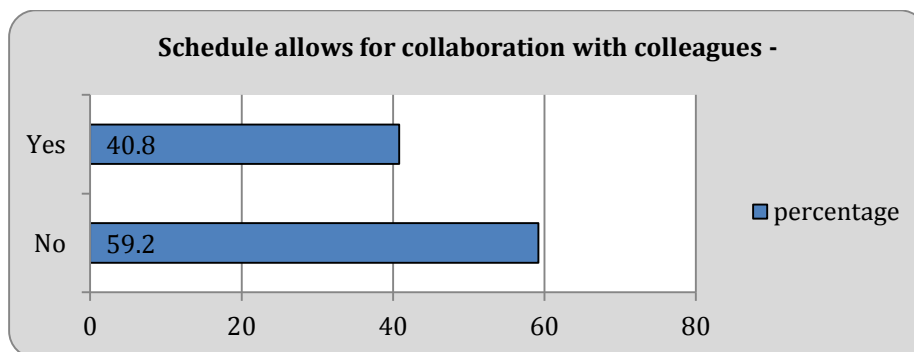
Teachers:



**Question:*

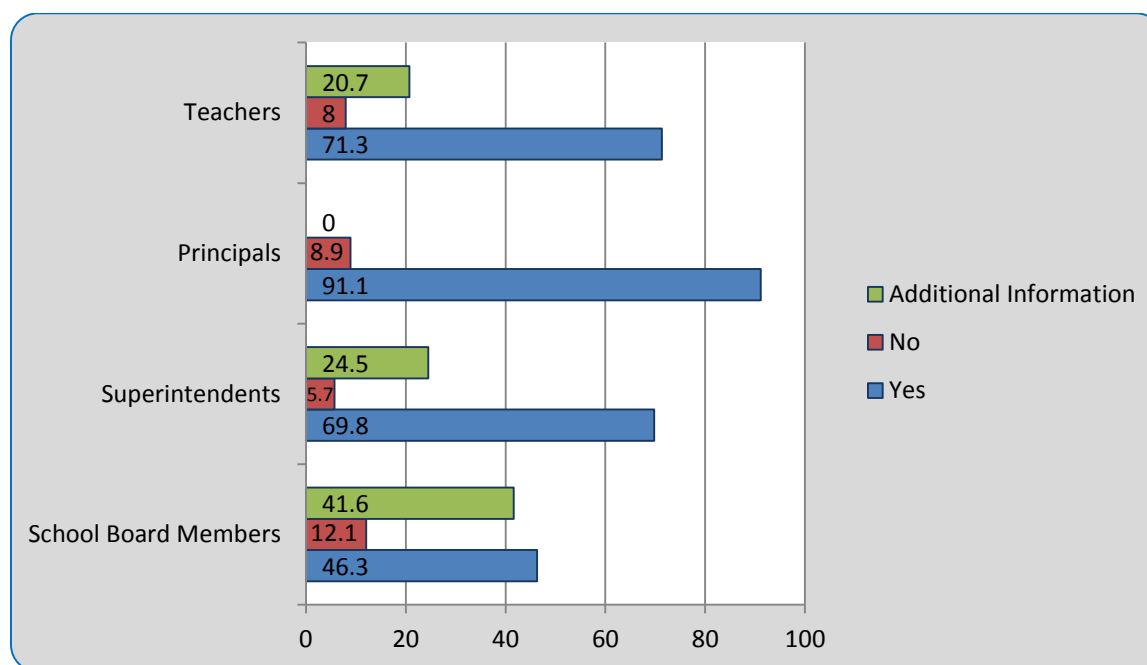
The district's schedule allows for collaboration time among colleagues.

Teachers:



Question:

After reading over the survey do you believe that adding formal teacher leadership roles in your district would support students, teachers, principals and staff?



Examining the New Teacher Leadership Endorsement Programs

Currently, through funding support from The Wallace Foundation and the P-20 Council, the P-20 Council TLE committee is expanding its work to study the new teacher leadership endorsement programs that universities have been implementing. Through this project, the TLE Committee will examine the 20 existing teacher leadership endorsement programs in Illinois and their alignment to survey responses from the field on district needs and identify best practices with distributed leadership structures that have already been conducted by committee staff. The end product of this work will be recommendations to the Governor, the Illinois P-20 Council, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education on how to strengthen the existing teacher leadership endorsement programs to better align with districts' needs, demands, and innovative practices.

Activities of this committee's work will be to:

- Examine the current state of university-based teacher leadership programs looking at the teacher leadership endorsement criteria.
- Compare content analysis of the programs with results from four field-based surveys on district distributed leadership needs.
- Conduct a gap analysis between the leadership talent management needs of school districts and current university endorsements that will look at whether the teacher leadership and principal endorsements are enough to fill certification training and needs for districts.

- Develop common understanding of how teacher leadership endorsement programs should play into a larger statewide model supporting distributed leadership structures in Illinois schools.

The P-20 Council's work in revisiting teacher leadership could not be more timely considering the national attention that teacher leadership is receiving through the national Teach To Lead Initiative.

Teach to Lead Initiative

The national Teach to Lead Initiative is an initiative jointly convened by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the U.S. Department of Education to advance student outcomes by expanding opportunities for teacher leadership, particularly those that allow teachers to stay in the classroom. Like IEA in Illinois, the U.S. Department of Education saw the natural connection between National Board Certification and teacher leadership and partnered with NBPTS to convene the Teach to Lead Initiative.

The Teach to Lead initiative seeks to:

- Highlight existing state and district systems that are working to support teacher leadership.
- Share resources to create new opportunities for teacher leadership.
- Encourage people at all levels to commit to expanding teacher leadership.

To create systemic and sustained change, Teach to Lead involves stakeholders at every level of education and is informed and driven by teacher voices. In coordination with eighty-five supporter organizations, Teach to Lead hosts regional teacher leadership summits to help spotlight and advance the groundbreaking, teacher-led work that is happening in states, districts and schools across the country. Summits allow participating teachers, principals, districts, supporter organizations and states to share ideas and best practices and identify common challenges in order to create actionable teacher leadership plans that can be enacted locally.

Illinois Teacher Leadership Network

In 2014, the Illinois State Teachers of the Year (IL-STOY) organization drafted a teacher leadership proposal for the first Teach to Lead Summit that was held in Kentucky. Their proposal was chosen for the Kentucky Summit and then later on as a learning lab in Springfield, Illinois. The US Department of Education facilitated the Springfield meeting to bring the Illinois Teachers of the Year together with educational interests in the state representing teachers, principals, superintendents, school boards, universities, parents, and other important stakeholders to discuss the topic of teacher leadership in Illinois. They met for six hours and at the conclusion of the meeting developed a mission statement along with five commitments to teacher leadership in Illinois. This document (below) had complete support from everyone at the table as shown below the commitments.

ILLINOIS TEACHER LEADERSHIP Network

OVERALL GOAL: To build a culture of teacher leadership in Illinois.

MISSION: Increasing success for all students through teacher leadership in instruction, professional collaboration, policy, and advocacy.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

- Changing the culture so that everyone understands, recognizes and promotes teachers as leaders.
- Promoting best practices in the development and utilization of teacher leaders.
- Finding the resources to provide the training and support to teacher leaders and administrators as they develop cultures of differentiated leadership.
- Providing opportunities for teacher leaders to become collaborative partners with multiple stakeholders in moving school communities forward.
- Improving practices in teacher leadership through a culture of continuous improvement.

www.nstoy.org/state/illinois

Out of the meeting came the mission statement, five commitments, a new name for the group - Illinois Teacher Leadership Network (ITLN) - and a request that the Illinois State Teachers of the Year organization convene the meetings and help to lead the teacher leadership work for the group. Educational stakeholders asking teachers to lead this work is the epitome of what teacher leadership represents! It is allowing teachers to have a voice and lead work that will directly impact their students.

Making Teacher Leader an International Imperative

Secretary Duncan invited six teachers to be a part of his official delegation to the fifth International Summit on the Teaching Profession that was held in Banff, Canada on March 29–30, 2015. Two out of the six teachers invited were chosen from Illinois by the National Network of Teachers of the Year, Joe Fatheree from Effingham and Pam Reilly from Palos Heights. Both Joe and Pam were chosen because they are active participants in the Teach to Lead Initiative and teacher leadership in the state. One full day of the summit was dedicated to teacher leadership.

During the summit, chief country delegates, secretaries and ministers of education, union leaders, and educational researchers sat at the discussion tables. All other delegates sat around the

perimeter of the room or in an overflow room observing the proceedings. Many policy makers described teachers as crucial components of change and progress. They spoke of empowering teachers with authority and shifting paradigms in the teaching profession. They discussed the idea of a shared vision and distributed leadership. One chief delegate declared, "Education is the key to productivity, and teachers are the key to better education systems." The Summit concluded with each country making three commitments to work on in the next year. Secretary Duncan invited all U.S. teachers to contribute to our delegation's discussion of *The United States Commitments to Education 2015*:

- Continue to work to increase the number of children with access to high-quality early learning and encourage teacher leadership in this regard.
- Work to increase access for learners of all ages to high-quality career and technical education and encourage teacher leadership in this regard.
- Convene summit in the U.S. to highlight teacher leadership and expand leadership opportunities.

When the United States hosted the first international summit in New York City in 2011, it wasn't evident that it would create an ongoing international community of practice dedicated to enhancing the teaching profession and improving learning for all students. But it has and that reflects the global view that all teachers and principals need and deserve excellent preparation, support and opportunities for growth. Our educators and students deserve nothing less.

Next Steps

With the increasing national and even international attention to the topic of teacher leadership, it is refreshing that Illinois is serving as a leader in the dialogue around this topic. This should not be surprising considering the leading role the state has played with National Board Certification. Yet, we know from this work that we need to do more than just have increased dialogue about re-envisioning leadership and teacher roles in our schools. This will take action and action that does not just re-assign roles and responsibilities but truly changes the culture for how teaching and leading is valued in our schools. Just as the first goal of the Illinois Teacher Leadership Network is to "Change the culture so that everyone understands, recognizes, and promotes teachers as leaders," we envision a broader goal in our education system in which principals are valued as instructional leaders and teachers (whether individually or collectively) provide influence into the whole school community on aligned strategies to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of what is best for our kids.

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Debbie Kasperski worked as a special education teacher for over thirty years. Her experience in teaching special education spans grades kindergarten through eighth grade. She also worked as a consultant for the Professional Development Alliance in Joliet where she provided professional development workshops to districts on differentiation and inclusion. Debbie earned her National Board Certification in Special Education in 2000 and recertified in 2009. She earned her master's degree in curriculum and instruction at National Louis University. She joined Illinois State University in 2010 and currently serves as the director of the National Board Resource Center (NBRC) at Illinois State University where she manages the Illinois support system for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Debbie developed the online support systems for NBPTS candidates and for training and assessing National Board mentors. She plans and organizes National Board Professional Development School recruitment, trainings, support and maintenance. She is a member of the Illinois P-20 Council, which serves as an advisory team to the Governor of Illinois and also serves on the P-20 Committee on Teacher and Leader Effectiveness. She can be reached at dkasper@ilstu.edu.



Pam Reilly

2014 Illinois Teacher of the Year

Illinois State Teachers of the Year (ILSTOY) - Vice- President
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Pam Reilly has a teaching career that spans over twenty years. She has taught kindergarten, first, and second grades along with junior high summer school. She currently has a hybrid role working as a teacher leader, supporting instructional coaches in Palos Heights District #128, and as a consultant for Illinois P-20 Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Committee. In addition to this work, she serves as the vice president of the Illinois State Teachers of the Year (IL-STOY) and serves on the Educator Advisory Committee for Advance Illinois. Pam is one of the facilitators of the Illinois Teacher Leadership Network convening meetings with Illinois educational stakeholders on the topic of teacher leadership. Pam was named the Illinois Teacher of the Year in 2014. She earned her master's degree in curriculum and instruction at National Louis University. Pam has given numerous speeches and teaches workshops to educators on utilizing technology in the classroom, teacher leadership and meeting the social and emotional needs of students. She is passionate about teacher leadership and helping to bring the Teach to Lead Initiative into Illinois schools. In addition to this, Pam works closely with the Department of Education and attended the International Summit on the Teaching Profession with Secretary Duncan in Canada in 2015. She can be reached at reillyreillypc@gmail.com.

Teacher Leader Program at Olivet Nazarene University

By Marianne Glenn

Author Bio:

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Introduction

Teacher leadership is not a new concept; it has been utilized for decades in schools and districts across the nation. Over the past twenty years, “teacher leadership” has been defined in a variety of ways, typically meaning that for a period of time the teacher may lead others in the completion of a designated task. Little to no formal training was required for this position; a teacher was selected for this role primarily because he or she was identified as having leadership attributes and could work with others to get the job done. Times have dramatically changed, making this model archaic due to the identification of student learning standards, the design of standardized assessments, increased teacher and principal accountability, and the promise of higher achievement for the students that educators serve.

The Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, comprised of education organizations, state education agencies, administrators, teacher leaders, and educators from universities and colleges, has identified the information, abilities, and capabilities teacher leaders need to fulfill leadership roles in the 21st century. According to the consortium, “The purpose of these standards—like all model standards—is to stimulate dialogue among stakeholders of the teaching profession about what constitutes the knowledge, skills, and competencies that teachers need to assume leadership roles in their schools, districts, and the profession” (Teacher Leader Model Standards, 2011, p.3).

The literature and research on teacher leadership, the Teacher Leader Model Standards (TLMS), the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards, and the 23 Illinois Administrative Code Section 25.32 validate that the leadership program is aligned with all three components of Olivet Nazarene University’s mission “to provide high-quality academic instruction for the purpose of personal development, career and professional readiness, and the preparation of individuals for lives of service to God and humanity” (Olivet University Catalog, 1915, as cited in Olivet Nazarene University, 2015).

Olivet Teacher Leader Program

As a result of the research, the new teacher leader program has evolved with curriculum foci on leadership frameworks, teacher evaluation, accountability, skills essential to leading teams in goal setting and achieving results, professional development needs, coaching capacities, school

culture development, data analysis, social-emotional learning competencies, and collaboration attributes. (See <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/25ark.pdf>.)

Olivet's teacher leader program, approved by the Illinois State Board of Education in 2013, has placed emphasis on a rigorous curriculum through which teacher leader candidates are able to hone their leadership skills by studying theories, exploring the theories in practice through observing colleagues, questioning the workings of the theories, documenting what is taking place in their schools, reflecting on their experiences, and, as much as possible, putting their discoveries and innovations into timely practice in their classrooms and schools. Olivet's teacher leader course of study has been carefully crafted through course selections, alignment to the TLMS, ISLLC, and InTASC Standards, practicum involvement, and reflective essays written after all practicum experiences. In addition, candidates have worked under the supervision of a school administrator to ensure the best practicum experiences were available to them. The practicum experiences have served two purposes: 1) to afford the candidates an opportunity to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge obtained within each class while linking it directly to the prescribed practicum assignment; and 2) to provide candidates with portfolio artifacts and reflective essays focusing on their application of theories to their classrooms and/or school communities. A clinical log, identifying the description of the activities and the number of hours spent, is kept for each practicum experience. The following information delineates the workings of Olivet's new teacher leader curriculum and the practicum experiences embedded in the coursework. The coursework and experiences connected to the courses will make for stronger teacher leaders in their classrooms and schools.

Leadership in Education requires candidates to examine the principles and techniques essential to teacher leadership, explore the expansion of the teacher role from the classroom to the school community, focus on research and best practices in leadership, study leadership frameworks and models of shared governance, converse about professional accountability, and expand their knowledge about how to lead collaborative teams in setting result-oriented goals. As a practicum experience, teacher leader candidates are required to interview an appropriate administrator about the leadership frameworks and models of shared governance that are prevalent in their schools. By developing a heightened understanding of responsive governance, collaboration in shared efforts can become a reality in schools. Typical questions at the heart of this interview are as follows:

1. What leadership frameworks are at work in the school where we teach?
2. In which areas is shared governance utilized in our school?
3. What do you see as the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of the use of shared governance in these areas?

A reflective essay is required to summarize interview findings and suggest ways to add or change the governance model in place.

Professional Development for Continuous Improvement of Teaching and Learning obliges teacher leaders to evaluate effective models of professional development and apply them to the teaching and learning needs identified in their schools; to understand the needs of new teachers and facilitate induction and mentoring programs to enhance skills to improve student outcomes; to learn to observe instruction and provide constructive feedback through teacher evaluation models and training; to learn effective coaching, and mentoring strategies; and to learn to design and provide professional development for their colleagues. The practicum rooted in this course necessitates the following:

1. Explaining the practicum activities to one's host administrator and obtaining his/her signature showing approval;
2. Finding a practicum partner who will participate in the practicum experience;
3. An initial classroom observation of approximately thirty minutes;
4. Two cycles of teaching improvement activities related to the Danielson Framework for Teaching to include self-assessment and goal setting (focusing on one component from Domains 2 or 3);
5. Teaching improvement discussions/practice sessions related to the stated goal;
6. Observing a teaching segment during which the new strategy is employed;
7. Discussing feedback with the teacher; and
8. Completing a full observation cycle (pre-conference, observation, and post-conference).

A reflective essay is required to express skills in classroom observation and how these skills can be used to assist colleagues in improvement of instruction.

Understanding Diverse Student Populations focuses on the learning environment and how it continues to become diversified due to changes in the neurological wiring of students, mobility, family configuration, immigration, and socio-economic status. The teacher leader candidates examine current knowledge about and resources available to make modifications for K-12 students in the regular classroom who have exceptionalities arising from disabilities, giftedness, and differences in culture and/or language. As a result, teacher leaders learn how to build school culture that focuses on student outcomes. In addition, teacher leaders learn to utilize the Social and Emotional Learning Standards to improve the learning environment. For their practicum experience, teacher leader candidates develop a "tool kit" that they apply in their classrooms and share with colleagues. This "tool kit" includes a variety of activities, visuals, writing prompts, lessons, etc., that can be utilized at a specific grade level to help students develop their social-emotional skills. A reflective essay is required on ways to build social-emotional learning skills into the curriculum.

Data-Focused Assessment and Evaluation concentrates on collecting, analyzing, and using data for creating change as a major component of the information age. Teacher leaders learn to analyze and to interpret data around school culture, working and learning settings, and school

climate. Teacher leader candidates examine how data-focused assessments build support for student achievement and school improvement. They engage in the multiple techniques for gathering and analyzing data, evaluating the validity, and the methods for collaborative review. The practicum requirement is to develop an assessment and learning plan based on a unit of instruction, which includes a taxonomy table (plot of the objectives, assessments, and learning activities of the unit); an analysis of data illustrating student achievement from the unit; identification of the strengths of the unit; and recommendations for improvement that will increase assessment validity. A reflective essay is required in which teacher leader candidates describe implications for future teaching and how assessment data can be used to change or to enhance instruction in their classrooms and/or their schools.

Building Collaborative Community Partnerships invites teacher leader candidates to explore school-community relations. Schools and their leaders cannot create effective and lasting change without the support of the community. It is imperative that all levels of leadership in the school build collaborative relations with all of the constituents of the school community. The teacher leader candidates examine the theory, research, and best practices relating to school, family, and community partnerships. Teacher leader candidates explore different types of partnerships, challenges to developing school-based partnership programs, components of effective partnership programs that enhance student performance and success, and how to evaluate their effectiveness to achieve the overarching goal of school improvement. For their practicum experience teacher leader candidates are to identify at least ten organizations, groups, individuals, and/or local individuals that could be “friends of change.” When establishing such partnerships, it is necessary that the teacher leader candidates share what type of assistance it is that teachers and students need to help them improve and succeed. It is also important that the candidates find out what it is that the individual or organization would like to do for the students. A reflective essay is required about how useful and instrumental the organization, agency, or individual would be to further the vision-mission of the partnership.

Foundations in Reading will develop in teacher candidates an understanding and framework concerning the foundational theories, processes, and methodologies impacting reading instruction required for today’s diverse K-12 student population. To understand current reading theory and the historical foundation, the teacher leader candidates explore the increasing complexities of current thought within this discipline, including the impact of technology as well as multicultural factors. Professional development can take many forms, but the most effective development includes individual educators in the formation and planning process. Educator study groups are one form of professional development that allows major stakeholders in the education process the autonomy to develop individual and group goals. This often translates into an improved ability to read research and translate it effectively in the classroom. In schools, study groups can meet to study and to support one another as they design curriculum and instruction innovations using the Common Core State Standards as a foundation; integrate a

school's practices and programs; study the latest research on teaching and learning; monitor the impact of new practices on students and staff; and analyze and target a school-wide need based on data. Schools are said to be better when educators build a shared understanding of what good teaching and learning looks like. To build a shared understanding, educators commit themselves to studying and learning from one another over time. For the practicum experience the teacher candidates coach a professional study group in their schools or districts. The topic of their study group is associated with reading and/or writing. The focus can be any of the five areas above. A reflective essay is required in which teacher candidates reflect on the coaching experience, its process, and the conclusions drawn from it.

ELL Student in the K-12 Mainstream: Accommodating through Awareness is designed to provide the K-12 mainstream teacher with the knowledge and tools necessary to accommodate the ELL student's English language learning needs inside and outside of the classroom. Accommodations through awareness of cultural differences and similarities are the foundational theme upon which the tools are built. The workings of this topic are applied universally to the daily encounters the mainstream teacher, the ELL student, and the family have with the student's English-language-learning. This explorative theme will also be implemented into the areas of assessment, instructional principles and practices, and resources as they apply to accommodating ELL students in the K-12 mainstream. The practicum experience will encompass a "facilitating change through collaboration project" (collection of resources). Each candidate researches and compiles a collection of resources for the K-12 ELL student; resources are located both within the Pre~K-12 school district where they work or live and outside of the school itself. Medians include books, software, institutions, and people. Teacher leader candidates must collaborate with school district faculty and staff and community constituents, as well as with fellow candidates to aid in developing ideas regarding where to search for possible resources. A reflective essay is required on how to utilize the resources in their classrooms and schools.

In ***Differentiated Instruction: Assessment and Instructional Strategies***, teacher leader candidates discover how to create an environment which meets the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students with varied abilities while addressing challenging state standards at the same time. The focus is on the meaning of differentiation, ways to effectively implement it in the classroom through strategies that work, and means by which to lead and manage a differentiated classroom to fit the individual needs of each student. For the practicum experience, the teacher candidates create a differentiated instruction lesson plan using the template given in the course. The lesson plan is available for peer review. Teacher leader candidates utilize standards, objectives and assessment measures; differentiate instruction by content, process, product and learning environment; and develop instructional strategies and instructional materials/technology to meet the needs of all students. A reflective essay is required regarding the differentiated instruction lesson plan created. Questions such as the following beg answers:

1. What did the teacher leader candidates learn about differentiating instruction?
2. What do they believe will meet the needs of their diverse students?
3. What do they need to learn more about or what do they need to improve?
4. What can they do with the lesson plan they developed to convince their peers to write and use a differentiated instruction lesson plan to improve student learning?

Currently there are twenty-three candidates in Olivet's teacher leader program who have a desire to help their principals and teacher colleagues with school improvement initiatives. Since they have not completed the program yet, no significant data are available to make any claims. However, reflective of Olivet's rigorous and practical coursework and hands-on practicum experiences to ready teachers for leadership roles is the following statement submitted by a teacher leader candidate who was enrolled in our Professional Development for Continuous Improvement of Teaching and Learning course: "This class as a whole has been one of the strongest professional development opportunities that I have had in many years. All of the information and skill practice has been applicable to my daily life as a teacher. This class gave me the self-assurance that I will have what it takes to be a strong teacher leader. I believe in the importance of continuing to grow and develop professionally as an educator and this class has given me an expansive addition to the tools that I will need to continue to build upon as a teacher leader in education."

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Teacher Leadership as a Catalyst for Change: Elmhurst College

By Debra K. Meyer, Melissa Migala, & Lisa Plichta

Author Bios

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Introduction

Recently, the *New York Times* led with a front-page story (August 9, 2015) about an emerging national teacher shortage, citing a turnaround in the economy and fewer people entering the profession. In response to the article, Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers, wrote to the editor:

...New and seasoned teachers want careers that allow them to make a difference, grow and effect change. Sadly, for too many, the profession today appears not to offer these essentials. Nationally, we must get our priorities straight and do what's necessary to recruit, support and retain great teachers — in good economic times and bad. (August 15, 2015)

Five years ago, when considering the lower number of new teachers entering the profession along with the large number of teachers about to retire, Ingersoll and Merrill (2010) argued that the “pending” crisis was really a shortage of experienced teachers because “a scarcity of veterans will mean fewer teachers able to provide mentoring and leadership” (p. 7). Ingersoll and Merrill concluded that, as the profession becomes primarily one of beginning teachers, teacher leaders will be essential to provide stability to school faculties as well as the profession.

Moreover, under-resourced schools have the greatest need for teacher leaders. In *Coming Up Short Finding Good Teachers*, McCaw and Mummert (2009) reported that because one in five to as many as three of every five new Illinois teachers leave the profession in the first year, school districts, especially those with geographic or specific content area needs, continually struggle to build their faculties. McCaw and Mummert proposed a 9-point solution for retaining teachers in Illinois districts. Five of these points were directly related to the need for more endorsed P-12 teacher leaders because they know how to: (a) respond to rapid changes in school reform, (b) help recruit a diverse and high quality teacher pool, (c) sustain professional development and

retention, (d) focus their colleagues into areas of high need, and (e) provide support for high quality new teacher mentoring programs. Thus, at Elmhurst College, the primary purpose of our teacher leader program is to provide advanced preparation of teachers as role models who could inspire and collaboratively lead change as colleagues, coaches, and mentors.

Elmhurst College's Teacher Leadership Program

The Teacher Leadership program at Elmhurst College (EC) was designed around the vision statement, *Teaching as a Catalyst for Change*. This vision is realized by three program goals, which align with our unit-wide outcomes, the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (2010), and the Teacher Leader Model Standards (2012):

1. Acquire skills for group facilitation and collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, including the students in their classrooms.
2. Participate in the development and evaluation of evidence- and research-based practices through critical inquiry.
3. Develop self-reflective and critical thinking skills that promote innovative practice and learning using a variety of perspectives.

The Teacher Leader Model Standards (TLMS) are the framework for the EC program. These standards specify seven domains of leadership deemed necessary for 21st century teaching and learning. The seven domains are reflected across the program goals. For example, TLMS Domains I and VI support *collaboration* through fostering a positive *school culture* and improving outreach with families and the community (Goal 1). Domains II, IV, and V emphasize how to use *assessments* and *action research* to enhance instructional practice and student learning as well as for district- and school-wide improvement (Goal 2). Finally, Domains III and VII form the foundation for *advocacy* and innovation through promoting *professional learning* for continuous improvement and advocating for students and the profession (Goal 3).

Teacher Leader Coursework and Clinical Experiences

The TLMS framework also articulates the Illinois State requirements for teacher leader programs as specified in 23 Illinois Administrative Code 25.32(3), which requires five key areas of teacher leader knowledge and skills: (a) leadership, (b) professional development, (c) school culture and learning environment, (d) assessment and school improvement, and (e) collaboration. Our program design has seven core curricular components (see Figure 1), each a focus of a course. To meet the 24 semester-hour endorsement requirement the eighth course is an elective, which is often an additional course from the advocacy or research course options, or in an area of exploration, such as administration, English language learning, or special education.



Figure 1. *Elmhurst College Teacher Leader Endorsement Framework*

With 8 three semester-hour courses comprising the EC Teacher Leader endorsement, each course/each component in Figure 1 is assessed through a key assessment. Course-based key assessments are comprehensive synthesis projects that include clinical application, analysis, and evaluation. In addition to passing the course, teachers must achieve a proficient score on each key assessment (78% or higher) or resubmit the project to successfully fulfill endorsement requirements. Furthermore, 100 hours of supervised clinical experiences must be documented across the program courses with 40 hours exploring diverse settings outside the teacher's classroom. Depending on the clinical assignments, the course professor or a pre-selected *resident supervisor* at the teacher's school oversees and verifies all clinical work. The course assignments and the clinical work are integrated to guide teachers through transforming their practices and impacting student learning in ways that move beyond their classroom walls.

Program Requirements

The EC Teacher Leadership program was approved by the Illinois Board of Education in spring 2014 and accepted its first students in summer 2014. Because the courses are not sequenced, teachers may apply to enter the program in the summer, fall, or spring terms and they may take one or two courses each semester. Whether completing the 24-semester-hour endorsement or the 34-semester-hour master's program, all applicants submit a formal application along with transcripts that include: (a) 1,000-word statement of purpose describing personal and professional goals and how graduate study will help them achieve those goals, (b) three letters of recommendation from educators and administrators who attest to their leadership qualities, communication skills, personal motivation, and capacity to succeed in graduate study, and (c) current résumé including licensure and endorsements, degree work, teaching experience, professional development activities, and leadership roles. The application materials are reviewed by the program director and an interview is scheduled with the applicant to discuss program requirements and "program fit" for the teacher.

The EC program was approved without a requirement for a minimum number of years of teaching experience based on our observation of some teachers in their second or third year already being appointed to leadership positions such as a department chairperson. Therefore, the application review and interview process is very important in determining if the program candidates are ready for graduate work in teacher leadership and that the program fits their professional needs. Currently, the teachers accepted to the program are all full-time P-12 licensed educators with a wide variety of experience levels (i.e., from 3 to 20 years) in public and private school settings.

Teacher Leader Outcomes

Approximately one-third of the teachers entering the program have already earned master's degrees and two-thirds are completing the M.Ed. in Teacher Leadership, which includes an action research course and an action research master's thesis. Currently, there are approximately 20 professional educators in the program with the first candidates completing the new teacher leader endorsement in summer and fall of 2015. Consequently, the impact of the program on teachers' practice, student learning, and their school communities is yet to be determined. Our assessment plan is to conduct the first five years of program evaluation through a series of surveys and on-site interviews. However, in the following sections, our first two program candidates present their perspectives by briefly describing how earning the teacher leader endorsement has impacted their practice and their schools.

An elementary education teacher leader, Melissa Migala, has been teaching for eight years and had already earned her master's degree before returning for the teacher endorsement. Melissa wrote:

When deciding to further my education I knew that I wanted to stay in the classroom, however, I wanted to become more involved in leadership opportunities, so it was apparent that the teacher leadership program at Elmhurst College was the perfect fit for me. Being in this program taught me a lot about myself as a teacher and impacted my teaching practice by showing me how to, (a) conduct action research projects, (b) facilitate and collaborate with colleagues, (c) analyze and lead professional development opportunities, and (d) understand school culture and the classroom learning environment. I also discovered current research and how to apply these findings in my classroom. For example, when participating in my action research project I learned how effective picture books could be for older readers. I was able to conduct the research, prepare an action plan, and utilize these picture books in the instruction. Then I was able to take what I learned a step further and disseminate this information to my colleagues. Using picture books as mentor texts during reading instruction is now a common practice that my colleagues utilize.

Furthermore, collaboration has been a key skill in becoming a teacher leader because understanding and communicating with colleagues is an essential component to being part of a team. The teacher leader program taught me how to lead professional development opportunities, co-plan and collaborate with team members, and how to become a role model and a voice for my fellow teachers. For example, I have had the opportunity to participate in a mentor program that my school offers for new faculty members in the district and apply the skills that I have learned to better help my colleagues in their teaching careers.

Last, I have been able to understand the culture, climate, and learning environment that I am a part of every day. The teacher leadership program has shown me just how much difference one teacher can make in the lives of not only students, but other school community members as well. I feel that this program has helped me fulfill my personal goal of being a life-long learner, which is a goal in which I ask my students to join me.

A high school teacher leader, Lisa Plichta, has been teaching for 13 years and is earning her master's degree as part of her teacher endorsement coursework. Lisa reflected:

The Elmhurst College Teacher Leader program has enlightened and empowered me in numerous ways. First, the variety of classes on topics such as assessment, professional development, and diversity have increased my awareness of the paradigm shift that is occurring in our national education system, and has affirmed my belief that changes are necessary to meet the learning needs of today's students. Second, through class discussions, reading materials, and projects, I have had many opportunities to analyze current best practice and apply it in my classroom. My students have benefited from what I have learned about creating a classroom environment that focuses on universal design, promotes social-emotional learning, and is culturally responsive and autonomy supportive. I have never felt more successful as a teacher thanks to the master's program at Elmhurst College.

Additionally, the teacher leader program's courses on collaboration, teacher leadership, and professional development have improved my work with my colleagues. Throughout the program, I have had multiple opportunities to disseminate research findings to my PLC groups and curricular teams. These presentations have allowed us to take a closer look at what data shows about our students, and to adjust our instruction accordingly. I enjoy the unique position of teacher leader because I am able to act as a sounding board and guide for my fellow teachers as we attempt to navigate the many rapid changes that are happening in our profession. I empathize with my colleagues because I face the same challenges in my own classroom, but because of what I have learned in my classes, I am also able to offer insights that will hopefully alleviate some of their fears and provide the strength to stay the course and focus on what is currently best for our students. In the years to come, I do believe that teacher leaders will be imperative to successful schools, and I look forward to supporting our profession with the skills I have developed through Elmhurst College's master's program for Teacher Leadership.

Looking Forward

Being a part of a national initiative in teacher leadership is exciting and challenging. Teacher leaders such as Melissa, Lisa, and their program classmates are inspiring in their passion and professionalism to effect positive change. To have teachers committed to advancing in leadership roles without leaving their classrooms is a tremendous advantage for their students and school communities (ASCD, 2013; Bond, 2015). The challenge, however, is that teacher leadership remains undefined for Illinois school districts. So the graduates of our teacher leader programs will be on the frontier of defining what it means to be a formally prepared teacher leader. Their leadership and impact will be essential for advancing the goal of well-prepared teacher leaders in every school.

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Teacher Leader Program at Quincy University

By Ann K. Behrens and Bruce A. Spitzer

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Introduction

In its report to the Illinois General Assembly in 2008, the Illinois School Leader Task Force determined, “Improvement of student learning in Illinois schools requires high quality leadership that establishes in every school a culture of high expectations and collaboration among all partners in support of student learning” (p. 4). The Task Force was created and worked under authorization of Illinois General Assembly House Joint Resolution HJ0066. Among various recommendations of the report was the development of graduate level programs that prepare early-career classroom teachers for leadership roles without transitioning too early to principal preparation programs. The recommendation emphasized “teacher leader” programs for those interested in increased leadership opportunities. (Illinois School Leader Task Force, 2008).

Quincy University introduced its teacher leader endorsement program in the summer of 2013, in response to an increasing demand for leadership within schools at the classroom level. As rules for administrative licensure changed at the state level, the new endorsement acknowledged two truths: 1) in the past, many teachers pursued administrative endorsement with no desire to ever serve as a principal; and 2) many teachers wanted to assume increasing responsibility for school leadership but did not want to leave the classroom. Danielson (2007) has described teachers as the individuals in a school who are best suited to guide the school improvement process because of their collective institutional memory, variety of pedagogical and content knowledge, and the ability to effect change within classrooms. She identified skills needed by teacher leaders as expertise in curriculum planning, assessment design, and data analysis, as well as skills in active listening, leading discussions, facilitating meetings, designing plans of action, and monitoring progress.

As the financial outlook for public and private education in the state continues to decline, persons in school leadership roles increasingly look to their own teachers for expertise and for leadership that begins in the classroom setting. A study of elementary principals faced with increasing budget constraints and higher external accountability found that effective leaders build on the experience and expertise of the people in their own school and school district (Behrens, 2005). Through collaboration and inquiry, teachers pose important questions about instruction, closely examine teaching practices, generate and test solutions to learning problems, and improve instruction for all students (Reason and Reason, 2007). Building upon a solid instructional foundation, principals can expand the capabilities and capacities of their faculty from within the building or district.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goals for the Quincy Teacher Leader program arose from the needs of schools and the teachers. These needs were documented not only in the literature but also in conversations with representatives of Quincy University's partner school district #172, Quincy Public Schools. Input from administrators, teachers serving in current leadership roles within the public schools, and the director of the teacher mentor program all worked with Quincy University faculty and administrators to identify the characteristics of effective teacher leaders and to design and/or re-design the coursework which would develop those skills. Input was especially valuable in designing the internship portion of the curriculum.

The goals of the teacher leader program are to:

1. Prepare classroom teachers for leadership roles focused on improvement of classroom instruction
2. Provide authentic opportunities to practice and develop skills needed for key teacher leader positions
3. Promote collaboration within a school setting with appropriate opportunities for professional growth.

The objectives for the program are aligned with the Illinois Teacher Leader Program Standards and the Model Standards for Teacher Leaders from the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium. All aspects of the program are also aligned with the Conceptual Framework of the QU School of Education.

Curricular Features

Throughout the development of the curriculum, emphasis on application of theory in authentic experiences was considered critical to success. A key component of the Quincy University program is the rigorous internship experience, which extends through most of a student's coursework. Requirements for the internship were tied to assignments within the coursework so that candidates would immediately apply what they learned to real-life situations. In addition, two courses require work in the field. The first is the Instructional leadership and supervision course in which candidates observe in classrooms and practice data-gathering, analysis of instruction, evaluation writing, and conferencing skills. The second is the course in designing professional development. Candidates conduct a needs assessment in a school, and subsequently plan, implement, and evaluate a professional development activity for faculty and staff that meets the identified need. In both courses, the work is authentic and immediately results in increased instructional effectiveness for both the teacher leader candidate and building teachers. In addition to foundational coursework, the QU Teacher Leader endorsement coursework offers two tracks for focused study. All students take a core of eight courses, or 24 credit hours. These courses include leadership, curriculum development, design of professional development, assessment, theories of teaching and learning, and instructional leadership and supervision. In conjunction with the core, students who wish to add a literacy focus take nine additional hours in advanced literacy techniques and assessment of reading disabilities. Those who opt for a more general focus take nine hours of coursework in motivation, organizational analysis, and human resource management. The generalist track could serve as introductory preparation for principal endorsement, although that is not the focus of the program.

Anticipated Outcomes

Recognition of teachers for their professional expertise and the empowerment to make changes to improve instruction represent the outcomes anticipated as teacher leaders assume leadership roles in schools. Whether in a formal, positional leadership role or as an informal leader, those who have the knowledge and skills developed through participation in the program will positively impact student learning. In an era when accountability for student learning continues to increase, those who work directly with instruction are most likely to implement changes resulting in academic growth. As the number of teachers retiring or leaving the profession continues to grow, the number of new teachers will surely increase. One way to mentor the growth of new teachers in curriculum development and pedagogy is through the influence and guidance of teacher leaders. As these new teachers become more proficient and begin to see themselves as instructional leaders, the number interested in pursuing formal leadership training is expected to increase.

Enrollment and Outcomes to Date

Enrollment was anticipated to be stronger than it is. One possible explanation for limited interest and enrollment is the lack of a state requirement to hold the endorsement for any position within the schools. While the program definitely is designed to prepare teachers to hold positions such as instructional coach, department chair, or grade-level coordinator, without such an endorsement requirement, school districts can fill these positions with teachers who lack formal training for leadership roles.

Recognizing of the value of the increased effectiveness of teacher leader-endorsed personnel, Quincy Public School administrators are engaged in on-going conversations with Quincy University School of Education about the school district requiring the endorsement for promotion to key leadership positions. Such collaboration would benefit both institutions and is a model worth exploring throughout the region.

Summary

The teacher leader endorsement program at Quincy University represents an important link in the leadership chain for K-12 schools. School districts and university preparation programs can work together to maximize resources and maintain a focus on learning.

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McKendree University's Teacher Leadership Licensure Program

By James Rosborg and Janet Wicker

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McKendree University has recognized that positive school leadership has to occur within the school environment beyond the principal and assistant principal positions. As Pamela Roggemon declared in the February, 2015 issue of *District Administration*, "The learning environment in today's K12 schools—and new assessments and standards such as Common Core—demand teacher leaders who are empowered to affect change in their schools." This was reiterated when the Illinois legislative panel referred to as the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) observed, "leadership by teachers enhances the overall school improvement mission of the school and its personnel." (Section 25.32, par. 1)

McKendree University designed and implemented a Teacher Leader licensure program to offer classroom teachers the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to assume a more prominent school leadership role in educating students, enhancing the curriculum and mentoring peers in their schools and districts. This program offers teachers the opportunity to "continue developing their professional commitment and competence" as they learn the components of school leadership. The program, designed to develop "advanced proficiency as an Illinois School Leader," is being embraced by area teachers as either an alternative to or a stepping stone to the administrative licensure (McKendree Graduate Catalog, 2015 p. 82). Our 33 hour program, including a 24 hour practicum and 120 hour internship, is offered on campus and at various cohort sites. At the conclusion of the program, student candidates can take sixteen (16) additional coursework hours to receive their principal endorsement. This flexibility allows individuals to explore thoroughly their desired career paths as they proceed through the coursework.

To further explain this point, McKendree University has recently taken the experiences of our initial Teacher Leader Licensure cohort and explored ways that an individual can now start out in a joint Teacher Leader and Principal Preparation Program and take basic courses in the areas of school law, curriculum, research, teacher evaluation, school and community relations, technology, and contemporary school issues. At that point, candidates can make the decision whether they want to continue with Teacher Leadership or get into the Principal Preparation Program. McKendree University has now designed the programs in such a way that this is an

easy adjustment with a couple of additional courses that are specific to each program along with corresponding internships that includes a 3 semester year-long internship in Principal Preparation versus the 1 semester internship in Teacher Leadership. Another decision that the student candidate has to make is that the Teacher Leader Licensure Program is a 33 semester hour program as opposed to the Principal Preparation Program which is a 39 semester hour program. McKendree University is excited about this adjustment as we see this as an opportunity to increase enrollment in leadership positions in the state of Illinois that has a drastic need for more candidates in the school administrator area.

In August 2014, McKendree University started its first cohort pursuing the Teacher Leader licensure. This cohort format has offered teachers the opportunity for professional development in an area they feel will provide them with a leadership voice within their districts. As one student remarked when asked how the degree might be viewed as a career enhancement, "I believe it will help me to be a 'voice' for others. I have already gained self-confidence in my leadership abilities." Another stated, "The coursework in this program has changed my feelings about many things in education including my role in it. It is preparing me to be more than a classroom teacher even if I remain in the classroom." A third student observed, "This particular degree seemed to be a perfect fit for the goals I had made for myself in my education career. I liked the Dean of Students/Head of Department aspect that is possible without the full administration. I wanted to see how I would like the thought of being an administrator before beginning that type of program and this degree gave me that opportunity." The comments above reinforce the thought that this program is a great educational enhancement not only for classroom teachers, but also for the schools and districts in which they teach.

School principals are seeing ever-increasing demands on their time which, in turn, means that they are struggling to accomplish all they want to do in the school day. Working in concert, administrators and teacher leaders can make a tremendous contribution to their schools and districts. As Coggins and McGovern note in the April 2014 issue of the *Phi Delta Kappan*, teacher leaders:

want to improve schools, expand their effect on students, and broaden their influence on the teaching profession. When we treat teacher leadership as a tool for fixing the critical challenges facing education and we measure its effect on those challenges, then teacher leadership becomes more than a nice idea. It becomes an indispensable avenue for school improvement and for building a high-performing, sustainable teaching force for the next generation. (p. 21)

Students in our inaugural cohort were also asked if this licensure was a stepping stone to the principal endorsement. One student responded, "I do not plan on using it as a stepping stone. As a teacher leader, I can truly make sure that teachers and students are both represented when the administration is discussing changes. Also, I feel that I am more knowledgeable about curriculum and can assist in making decisions in the future about the curriculum in the school." Another stated, "I am not planning on becoming a principal. I would like and am trying to become more vocal within my school district, union, etc. I would like to help implement positive changes within my school district that will better service the needs of the students and teachers."

Some students did not intend to pursue the Principal endorsement at the outset of the degree, but have seen that the Principal endorsement coupled with the Teacher Leader licensure could enable them to become more effective administrators. When asked if he had chosen this degree as a

replacement for an administrative degree one student said, “In the beginning of my program that was the goal. However, now, I have decided to go ahead and pursue the principal endorsement when I have completed this degree.” The results of our survey allowed us to conclude that a student going into the Teacher Leader program has choices even within the classwork whether to pursue individual building leadership roles or on to obtain the licensure as a principal/assistant principal.

These options lead to additional leadership and academic input in the school setting. As Judith Nappi observed in the summer 2014 issue of Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, “Skilled **leadership** is an important factor in **school** and student success; however, in today's educational and financial climate, no matter how skilled the **school principal**, he or she cannot go solo. **School** and student success are more likely to occur when distributed or shared **leadership** is practiced.” (p. 29) This collaborative team approach is a focus of the McKendree University program along with providing an openness in class discussions to allow the student candidate to pursue their future course of education so that they receive the background knowledge to make the best decision for themselves regarding their future direction in leadership.

The overarching goal of the McKendree Teacher Leadership program is to offer classroom teachers the opportunity to take a more integral role in their schools. The students currently pursuing the Teacher Leadership licensure feel that this goal is being met by providing them with future opportunities in their schools and districts to be change agents as representatives for their fellow teachers. As Nappi says, “Allowing **teachers** to take on **leadership** roles not only has an impact on their classrooms and the **school**, but also supplies the **school** with professionals who may eventually take on formal roles in educational **leadership**. Effective organizations have a healthy culture that is sustained through **leadership** that is consistent in nature.” (2014, p. 31)

In discussion with current school leaders, there seems to be the general feeling that there needs to be a greater effort by both the universities and the Illinois State Board of Education to communicate the opportunities of this new licensure opportunity for Illinois educators. One administrator we interviewed stated that she has noted that when it comes to job openings districts are still posting as minimal requirements a “Type 75” or “general administrative” license. Many school districts are not including the new principal license or the teacher leader license in their prerequisite application requirements. There is a clear need for greater understanding at the local district level of the changes that have taken place in the state of Illinois licensure process.

In addition, efforts need to be made to show that the Teacher Leadership licensure program can fit the needs of the school for internal professional growth. For the first time, a teacher can get a degree that focuses on being a leader in schools in areas such as curriculum specialist, mentor teacher, department chair, dean of students, and content specialist. A teacher can now be an effective school leader without being a principal while advancing the school’s mission to achieve student academic growth, shared leadership, and professional development of high performing teachers.

McKendree University feels the Teacher Leadership licensure degree will enhance positive change in the school environment leading to improved student success in becoming productive

citizens. McKendree University looks forward to its first cohort of Teacher Leadership candidates who will graduate in the spring of 2016.

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Teacher Leader Case Study: North Central College

By Kathleen King and Kathy Black

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Teacher leadership has been an integral part of North Central College's educational design for its Masters in Education program for almost ten years. Its genesis was born in research regarding the great benefits of fostering strong teacher leaders.

Certainly the research findings from the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVASS) Database made clear the impact of teacher effectiveness as a determinant of student achievement (Sanders Horn 1998). The broader implications of teacher leaders impacting school efficacy provided plentiful cause for excitement. then as it does today. As indicated in *New Leaders 2015* report, *Untapped*, teacher leaders are an untapped resource:

At schools with true teacher leaders, a diverse group of carefully selected and well-prepared adults gradually master and share leadership responsibilities. They work as a team, and make hiring decisions, set curriculum and training and establish practices based on their various sources of expertise. These schools are true professional learning communities, where teachers guide and coach one another toward instructional excellence. They fill gaps in leadership capacity, making school leadership more inclusive for teachers and sustainable for principals. And they accelerate student learning—research shows schools have better academic outcomes when leadership is shared. (Valdez, Broin, and Carroll 2015)

As part of North Central College's redesign of its curriculum and instruction program (C&I) in 2007, well before state creation of a teacher leader endorsement, North Central crafted the bookends of its C&I program to be an introductory teacher leader course and a capstone teacher leader course. Lieberman & Miller's *Teacher Leadership* (2004), Ackerman and Mackensie's *Uncovering Teacher Leadership*

(2007), and Eunice Merideth's *Leadership Strategies for Teachers* (2006) were just a few of the influences on this early foundation of the teacher leadership framework at North Central College.

When the state created the teacher leader endorsement and North Central College crafted a program to best meet its potential, the groundwork for fostering teacher leadership already had deep program roots at the College. Research indicates that teacher leaders are involved in student learning and achievement as they assist in school improvement efforts, collaborate on curriculum and work as peer coaches with teachers in the building. Their role may be structured differently depending on their school, but peer coaching, "differentiated coaching" and shared instructional leadership have a positive effect on teachers and student achievement (Goodwin, B. 2013). Thus, North Central College seized on the opportunity to offer the Illinois teacher leader endorsement, becoming one of the first schools in Illinois to seek and receive approval in September 2013.

Illinois' creation of a teacher leader endorsement provided an opportunity to add credentials to what had been an evolving approach to fostering educational leadership from the classroom. This recognition by the State of Illinois of the importance of teacher leadership has been a "game changer," but it has not yet realized its full potential, in part due to the ongoing issue of how teacher leadership will be defined by both candidates and the Illinois districts who provide the opportunities for teacher leadership in schools.

North Central College's teacher leader endorsement program is based on the teacher leader strand that had existed as an option within its C&I program. This strand allowed students to take several relevant courses from the educational leadership track and apply them as a concentration within the C&I program. The teacher leader endorsement program at North Central College reflects a confluence of curriculum and instruction coursework with educational leadership coursework. It is heavily influenced by the lessons learned in developing teacher leader coursework prior to the existence of the teacher leader endorsement, while also undergoing coursework revisions to best meet state-crafted criteria for teacher leaders. The program has been inspired by National Board Certification propositions, but its outcomes and supporting anchor assignments are structured around the Teacher Leader Model standards.

North Central College crafted a framework for admissions and program completion for the teacher leader endorsement program that was heavily influenced by the rigorous state-prescribed aspects of the principal endorsement program. Therefore, candidates for the teacher leader program at North Central must undergo a second phase of admissions (the first phase being admission to the College) to be accepted into the teacher leader endorsement program that includes an interview by at least two department faculty, presentation of a portfolio of teacher leadership attributes, and an on-site writing sample in response to a case study prompt. This second phase of admission only takes place after students have completed an introductory

course on Leadership in the 21st Century that is intended to walk candidates through the discernment process, assuring teacher leadership is not only an area of passion but also an area of aptitude.

Features of the program include an emphasis on the Danielson framework (as reflected in the department's conceptual framework), action research, exploration of peer evaluations, case studies, partnership building, cohort development (PLCs) and relevant field experiences. The program emphasizes relevant experiences in the field to help teacher leader candidates develop both breadth and depth. In every course, candidates prepare at least five artifacts as evidence of their teacher leader competencies, and reflection regarding ongoing professional development is inherent to this process. Moreover, candidates in teacher leadership develop an understanding of administrative operations and perspectives, while embracing the unique benefits of influencing change as a faculty stakeholder.

Upon completion of the program, candidates produce a substantive paper connecting research and theory to best practices of teacher leadership in the field as evidenced via collected evidence of teacher leadership practice. Moreover, a culminating portfolio of artifacts aligned to Teacher Leader Model standards is also required for program completion, assuring that students have honed their skills in relevant and rigorous ways, substantiated via evidence of best practice.

One of the issues that emerged from pre-endorsement work in teacher leadership at North Central was the ambiguity one faced in defining a teacher leader as well as the challenge of defining teacher leadership roles without crossing into strictly administrative roles. Though this defining of teacher leadership is an evolving process which demands a level of flexibility appropriate to circumstances of the candidate and school, North Central has leaned towards defining teacher leadership as distinct from administrative leadership in that teacher leaders generally teach the majority of the day versus serving in strictly leadership roles. This operational framework was an important aspect of honing the focus of teacher leadership development as distinct to administration.

Another challenging aspect of teacher leadership has been the reticence of districts to post positions for the teacher leader credentials versus requiring the principal endorsement or former Type 75. As North Central College developed its teacher leader program and worked with partner districts, it became clear that the college was serving as the conduit for information on the changes to the principal endorsement and the development of the teacher leader endorsement. Even now, several years after the creation of the teacher leader endorsement, it does not seem that partner districts have developed a clear understanding of the usefulness and appropriateness of the teacher leader endorsement and it has generally not emerged as a consideration in job descriptions for hiring leadership roles. This external value placed on the teacher leader endorsement will need to be fostered to assure its appeal to prospective candidates. It does appear that districts are becoming more comfortable with the preparation teacher leader endorsement

programs provide, but gaining district support remains an area of ongoing concern in building recognition for the teacher leader role.

Initially, lack of information and thus support for the teacher leader endorsement has had a negative impact on the number of candidates pursuing this program. Moreover, the additional issue of lack of awareness of its existence as a program at the college likely also had an impact. Only recently has North Central College started to see some promising results in terms of an emerging candidate pool. At this time the North Central teacher leader endorsement program has had seven graduates, and thirteen additional students are currently enrolled.

Moving forward, North Central intends to capitalize on its district partnerships to enhance its teacher leader program while also promoting the unique advantages of teacher leadership to its district stakeholders. The benefits of promoting the capacity of teacher leaders should, in fact, meet school and district needs while also growing the pool of candidates in the North Central College teacher leader program. Ultimately, the students will be the greatest benefactors of this increased school capacity for positive school change.

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